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PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA[1]

De Decem Oraculis.

THE Decalogue is the natural sequel to the "lives of the patriarchs," which constitute the unwritten laws of the Jewish nation. Accordingly, it must be carefully expounded and no allegorical meaning, which can be discerned lurking in it, passed over.

The first question to be considered is, "Why was the Law given in the desert?" The answer is plain. Cities are full of untold evils, offences both against God and against man. Further, the soul of the man who is about to receive holy laws must needs be purged of those deep stains which a motley crowd of men has produced long retirement is needed before spiritual nourishment can be taken with any advantage, just as in the case of bodily sickness. In the third place it was necessary for the people to receive and grow familiar with their new constitution before they settled in their new home and had to put it in practice. Some allege yet another reason, which is very near the truth: the people needed some proof that these laws were divine oracles and not human inventions, and found it in the miraculous support, which God bestowed upon them in the barren wilderness. But all these are only reasonable conjectures: God alone knows the truth.

The laws in question are of two kinds—according as they are declared by God himself or through the prophet

[1] This article is one of a series in which various of the Philonean writings will be summarized.

Moses. The first are general principles, the second particular applications. Naturally then we must first consider the first class, that is the Decalogue.

The people—men, women, and children—were assembled together, and God spake to them ten words or oracles. The number *ten*, δεκάς, is the most comprehensive of all numbers, and owes its name to the fact that it contains (δέχεσθαι: δεχάς) within itself every kind of number and progression of numbers—arithmetical, geometrical, and harmonic—and represents the whole universe, inasmuch as it is the sum of 1 (the point) + 2 (the line) + 3 (the plane) + 4 (the solid). Moreover, there are ten so-called categories:—substance, quality, quantity, relation, action, passion, possession, situation, time, and place. But such considerations belong to a mathematical (or logical) treatise, and the question of God's voice is more germane to our present purpose. Let no one suppose that God is as a man and spake as a man. This voice is miraculous—a special creation which gathered strength on its way, so that those afar off heard as well as those close at hand, but all with their souls and not with their ears.

But why are the commandments formulated in the singular (*Thou*), when a multitude was present? Readers of the Holy Scriptures may learn from this that each individual who keeps the law and obeys God is as precious as the whole Nation, nay more, as the whole world. Another reason is that commands and prohibitions are more impressive if addressed to each individual in the audience. Again, every human king and tyrant may learn from this to despise none of his subjects, not even the meanest, since God the king of kings deigned to address himself to every one of the mortals assembled before him. So I will be affable to all who differ from me only in fortune not in nature.

The attendant circumstances, the thunder, lightning, voice, cloud, and fire are all wonderful, for it was right that, when God's Power approached, none of the parts of the universe should rest, but all be moved together to

render service. Notice, too, that the people *saw* the voice (Exod. xx. 18), since what God says is not word but deed.

After this preface we reach the Decalogue itself, and find it divided into two groups of five oracles each. The first and primary group begins with God the creator of the universe and ends with parents the procreators of individuals. The second and secondary contains all the prohibitions. Each oracle must be considered by itself.

Now the best and the beginning of all things is God, and the best and the beginning of virtues is piety. But a grave error has taken possession of the majority of mankind in respect of a matter which might reasonably be supposed to be implanted beyond the reach of error in the minds of each one. Thus some have deified the four elements earth (Kore, Demeter, Pluto), water (Poseidon), air (Hera), and fire (Hephaestus); others the sun (Apollo), moon (Artemis), and the stars fixed and the planets (e.g. Aphrodite and Hermes); others only the heaven; others the whole universe. This is to put the slave in the place of the master, to honour the temporal as if it were the Eternal, the created as the Creator. Let us reject these follies of the impious and all their words by which they who might be saved are destroyed, and engrave in our hearts the first and holiest of the commandments to acknowledge and honour one, the most high God. These polytheists and idolaters are like ships without ballast that can never make their port, worse and more miserable than those whose bodily eyes are blinded. Why are the craftsmen who make the idols left to live and die without money or honour, while the idols are tended and worshipped by the noblest of the land? Why not revere the hand that fashioned them, or the tools? The best of prayers and the end of happiness is assimilation to the divine. Yet the idolaters would reckon such a prayer a curse. The Egyptians go further. Not content with images they deify animals. If they stopped at the worship of the ox, the ram, and the goat they might plead, with some show of reason, that these

animals are most serviceable to man. But when they worship lions, crocodiles, and poisonous asps they pass all bounds. And can anything be more ridiculous than their cult of the dog, cat, wolf, ibis, hawk, and fish. So much for the second commandment, the prohibition of idolatry, which Philo does not clearly distinguish from the first which proscribes polytheism.

The position of the third commandment will be understood by the clear-sighted. A name is always second to the thing it denotes, just as the shadow follows a body. Multifarious are the sins of men in this respect. It is best and most rational to refrain from swearing, every word being as good as an oath. Next best is to swear truly. Avoid the necessity of taking an oath if possible; if it cannot be avoided then be very cautious. An oath is no light matter though conventionally regarded as such: it is the taking God to witness in respect of a disputed point. Remember that conscience is at once accuser and judge, and if unsatisfied will plague a man till he break off his miserable life. Even the worst of men would hesitate to go to a friend and call upon him to testify to something which he did not witness as if he actually had witnessed it. The friend would refuse and repent of his friendship, you say. But what else does the perjurer when he calls upon God to witness to a lie? Soon or late justice exacts the penalty of such a crime.

The fourth commandment enforces the holy observance of the sacred Sabbath. Some nations keep the seventh day from the new moon as a feast, but the Jews keep it every week. In the week of Creation God himself observed it, and in this as in all else man must follow God. On the seventh day man also must rest from his work and devote himself to philosophy, considering all his actions during the previous six days in order to the correction of all faults already committed and the prevention of such in the future. What else is the meaning of the Scripture that God rested on the seventh day, having

accomplished the work of creation in the six, since God is independent of time?

The fifth is the border-line between the two groups. It is the last of the sacred duties inculcated in the first, and links on with the duties toward men contained in the second. Procreation is akin to creation. Some men are content with performing their duties towards God, others with accomplishing their duties towards man. In either case they are convicted in one court of justice, human or divine. To our parents we owe what we can never repay. Men who disregard this natural obligation should imitate the beasts, who repay the services bestowed upon them. House-dogs protect and die for their masters when any danger suddenly overtakes them. Shall a man be less grateful than a dog? Storks put to shame sons who honour not their parents. A man who is impious towards his immediate and visible parents cannot be pious towards his invisible Father.

So much for the first and diviner pentad. The second group, of prohibitions, begins with the sin of adultery as the greatest of crimes. Its source is the love of pleasure, and it necessitates a partnership of teacher and disciple in sin. Not only the body but also the soul of the adulteress is alienated from her husband. By this sin, all the more deadly because it is secret, untold evils are produced. The innocent children of such illicit unions are absolutely destitute of parent or parents.

The second commandment of this group forbids murder. Man is pre-eminently a sociable and gregarious animal, and the manslayer therefore breaks the law of nature. Further, the murderer is guilty of sacrilege as having despoiled the most sacred of God's possessions, since man in virtue of his soul is akin to the heaven and, as most believe, to the Father of all.

The third (i.e. the eighth) commandment is directed against the thief, who is the public enemy of any city. Some, the greater thieves, dignify their crimes with the

titles of sovereignty. Such a tendency should be nipped in the bud, for a habit long indulged is stronger than nature.

False witnesses are condemned in the fourth (i. e. the ninth) as guilty of many grievous offences. First, they corrupt truth, man's most sacred possession. Secondly, they co-operate with wrongdoers. Thirdly, they defeat the ends of justice and mislead the judges.

Last of all, covetousness is forbidden. This is the most grievous disease which the soul can suffer; for the covetous man endures the tortures of Tantalus, ever yearning for the unattainable; and it is the source of all the ills of mankind.

These ten words are summaries of all the laws. For example, the fourth commandment, which deals with the observance of the seventh day, sets forth the principle which regulates all the feasts, including the so-called Passover, when the whole nation dispenses with the priests and on one day in the year celebrates its own sacrifice.

Such, then, are the laws which God himself proclaimed in person; whereas the particular applications of these general principles were delivered through the perfect prophet who was inspired to that end. No penalties are attached thereto, since the Lord is good and is to be considered as causing no evil but only good. Yet sinners are not thus promised immunity: God knew that his assessor, Justice, who watches human affairs, would not rest, being naturally a hater of evil, but would welcome as a kindred function the punishment of offenders. The great King is charged with the common well-being, while his underlings take vengeance of sinners. Indeed God is the prince of peace, his servants chieftains of war.

Quod Liber sit quisquis Virtuti studet.

The treatise *That the good man is free* begins with a reference to its lost companion, *That the evil man is a slave,*

which recalls the preface to the Acts of the Apostles. Its thesis—one of the Stoic paradoxes—seems to Philo to need some apology, which he bases on the Pythagorean maxim, "Do not walk on beaten tracks." The true philosopher obeys this oracle, and strikes out a new path for himself. The unclean may not enter it, that is all who have not tasted education or have tasted it amiss, perverting the beauty of wisdom into the shame of sophistry. Such cherish still the popular notions of wealth and poverty, slavery and nobility, which to the philosopher are simple madness. Blinded in mind, they are slaves of opinion, dependent on the senses whose judgment is always corrupted and unsure. They will submit their bodies to the physician, but never their souls to the wise. Yet so they might unlearn their ignorance and gain also knowledge, man's peculiar possession. It remains then that all the youth everywhere should dedicate the first-fruits of their prime to education and nothing else, and therein spend their strength and their age, leaving no part of their lives to be regretted when once they become hierophants of the mysteries.

The next step must be the strict definition of the terms of the proposition. "Slavery" and "freedom" are of two kinds—bodily, and of the soul. The masters of the body are men of greater strength, and bodily freedom is therefore security from such: the masters of the soul are vices and emotions, and freedom of the soul or mind effects release from their domination. But of course we are concerned only with the latter, since bodily freedom is a matter of chance or fate. Setting aside then all popular conceptions, we say with Sophocles, God is my ruler immortal. For indeed only he is free who has God alone as his chief, and he is chief of all other, being entrusted with all earthly affairs as the mortal vicar (διάδοχος) of the great immortal King.

Now any one who goes into the heart of things knows that nothing is so close akin to freedom as independence

of action (*αὐτοπραγία*). Wicked men are hampered by avarice, ambition, and lust, but the good man has learned to disregard the behests of all such appetites and emotions—even the last infirmity of minds that would be free, the fear of death. The philosopher endures the buffetings of chance and defies the threatenings of men. It is with him as with the boxer who patiently bears all the blows of an active antagonist until he wearies him out and wins the fight and the crown. He stands firm, supported by unwavering reason, and is subject to no compulsion, though his life be passed in what men count a subordinate position. Even slaves become sometimes the masters of their owners. I myself have seen slave girls conquer their lords by beauty and grace of speech. Is a man the master of a lion in virtue of his ownership?

There are many other ways in which one may learn the freedom of the good man. The test of true happiness leads to the same conclusion. If we regard the good as friends of God, pagan poets and the Jewish lawgiver agree in acclaiming them as not merely free, but kings of kings. Indeed, the latter, who is reputed a student of naked philosophy, actually dared to call the man possessed by divine love and worshipping the Absolute alone, no longer man but God (see Exod. vii. 1). Surely such an one is happy, for God is no weak champion nor neglectful of his friends.

Moreover, in cities the subjects of oligarchies or tyrannies endure slavery, whereas men living under the protection of laws and constitution are free. And so with men generally. If anger, lust, or any vice have dominion over them they are slaves. But that man is free who lives with Law, not this or that particular code, but right reason, the fountain-head of all law, graven not on paper or on stone, but in the mind incorruptible as itself. Shall the laws of Solon and Lycurgus be held to guarantee the freedom of Athenians and Spartans and not Reason the freedom of the wise?

Intercourse on terms of equality (*ἰσηγορία*) is another

plain proof of the freedom of the good. Only musicians speak freely with musicians, and so through all the list of experts. And the converse is equally true on this line of reasoning, as Zeno says, "Shall not the wicked howl for it if he contradict the good man?" borrowing from the Jewish Law (Gen. xxviii. 40), which reckons slavery the greatest boon for the fool.

In my judgment the arguments already alleged are enough to prove the proposition. But it is quite easy to show by a syllogism that the wise or good man is free in his life and in all his actions. And if we are asked for living examples we can find them now as well as in the past. Of course they are not common, for all good things are rare, and such men naturally avoid the wicked world, despairing of its amendment. We must search for them as we search already for precious stones and metals. But the quest of virtue does not involve journeys over lands and seas, as the wise lawgiver of the Jews says, "It is in thy mouth, and in thine heart, and in thine hands" (Deut. xxx. 11), hinting by symbols at words, actions, and plans, all which need cultivation. They who despise leisure produce immortal shoots, the virtues which bear, or, as some hold, constitute happiness. Such labour is distasteful to the generality of mankind, and so the world is full of wealthy and famous men and of pleasure-seekers, while there are few prudent, righteous, and good. Yet, though the latter be rare, they do exist, as Greece testifies with its Seven Wise Men. Nor is the barbarian land destitute. Persia has the Magi, India the Gymnosophists. In Palestine and Syria are the Essenes, more than four thousand in number, namesakes of Holiness (*ὁσιότητος*). These worship God as few others, sacrificing no victims, but seeking (*ἀξιοῦντες*) to make their own minds holy (*ἱεροπρεπεῖς*). They avoid cities for fear of the contagion of vice, and live in villages. Some till the ground, others practise arts which make for peace. They eschew hoards of silver and gold and large estates. All they wish is to provide for the neces-

sities of life. No man is slave among them; all are free and minister in their turn. The relation of master and servant they regard as not merely unjust, but unnatural, for all men are born brothers. With regard to philosophy, they leave logic to the word-hunters; physics, save in so far as it relates to the existence of God and the creation of the world, they regard as too high for men; but ethics they work out, using as trainers the laws of the fathers, which it is impossible for mortal man to understand without divine inspiration (κατοκωχῆς). These laws they learn daily, but especially on the seventh day. For the seventh day has been accounted holy, and on it they forgo all other tasks and come to the holy places, which are called synagogues, where they sit according to age in rows, the young at the feet of the old. Then one takes the books and reads, and another, one of the most experienced, comes forward to expound what is not common knowledge in accordance with traditional symbolism. And so they are instructed in piety, sanctity, righteousness, economy, polity, understanding of the truly good, bad, and indifferent, all determined by the threefold rule of love of God, of virtue, and of man. Such is their love of man that they hold their homes and goods as common to all the brotherhood.

But if communities are rejected as witnesses we can point to individuals. Calanus, the Indian gymnosophist, for example, was summoned by Alexander the Great to prove to the West the wisdom and virtue of the East. He refused, and when threatened with compulsion, replied, "What worth shall I be in the eyes of the Greeks if I am compelled to do what I do not wish," and his letter is to the same effect. Euripides puts the same sentiments in the mouths of Hercules and of Mercury, who dominated the master who bought him.

But some one will object to my citing the heroes, who were demigods, in evidence. Well, Anaxarchus and Zeno the Eleatic recked nought of terrors or tortures, triumphed

over fire and sword. Boxers in their hope of victory will endure to the death, and shall not the athletes of the mind reck as little of the body, and be ready to die for liberty, that with mind unenslaved they may accomplish their fated paths?

Death may be the end of their struggle, as in a fight between two equally matched combatants, but is such death for the sake of freedom less noble than death for the sake of a crown of olive or parsley? History has many examples of men, women, children, and whole nations who preferred death to slavery, and refused to humble themselves before their conquerors. Noble souls, like Diogenes the Cynic, like Chaereas of Alexandria, like Theodorus the atheist, have something royal about them, and their splendour is not dimmed by misfortune.

One can find examples of this freedom of the wise as of all other human virtues in the brute creation. Gamecocks, for example, will not yield though they are beaten; as Miltiades knew when he shamed the Athenians into facing Persia by a main. Shall the wise and good yield the prize to birds?

Freedom is renowned among all the ancient nations, and for it they fought. The Athenians approve themselves clearest sighted of all Greeks in this, that, when they send an embassy to the Eumenides, they exclude all slaves and all evil-livers. So as the pupil is to the eye, as the power of reasoning to the soul, thus is Athens in Greece. Not long since I saw them rising to applaud that sentiment of Euripides, "the name of freedom is worth all: having this the poor man is rich."

If the wise man is threatened with slavery let him, like Antigenides, reply "then I will teach my master moderation." Banishment, fines, blows, death, have no terrors for him. But conscience can make slaves of nobles of long lineage, and asylums cannot, like the refuge for virtue, protect refugees from the shafts and arrows that fly from the ambushes of the passions. The freed man is freed only in name—

as well might the herald proclaim him grammarian, geometrician, or musician, when he has never even dreamed of such arts. The nature of a man's soul decides his condition. All are enslaved by lust, fear, anger and grief, or else have overcome these myriad masters. As for those who are neither conquerors nor conquered, whose souls are like those of young children, must be nursed, fed first with tender food instead of milk, i. e. general education, then with the stronger meat of philosophy, till they come to man's estate and reach the happy goal, life in conformity with Nature.

De Cherubim.

"And he cast out Adam" (Gen. iii. 24). Above (ibid., 23) the phrase was "sent out," and the difference is not without real significance. He that is *sent out* is not prevented from returning; but he that is *cast out* by God suffers eternal banishment. The first, not yet marked by vice, if he repent may return home to virtue from which he fell away; but the second, oppressed by incurable disease, must endure eternal and undying torments, condemned to the abode of the ungodly, there to suffer unmixed and continual misery. So Hagar left Sarah, who is Queen Virtue, twice and only once returned (Gen. xvi. 6 ff., xxi. 14). Her second and eternal flight follows the change of name and the appearance of Isaac, for then the natural philosopher and his wife had been transformed in soul as in name, and there was no more place with them for ordinary culture and her sophist son.

When Adam was cast out, the fiery sword and the Cherubim took up their abode *over against* Paradise. This phrase *over against* is used in three senses: of an enemy (Gen. iv. 16), of a litigant in court (Num. v. 18), and of a friend (Gen. xviii. 22 f.), as here. But what are the Cherubim and the turning fiery sword? Perhaps they are the outer and inner spheres, which contain respectively

the fixed stars and the seven planets and revolve continually in opposite directions, the sword being the eternal revolution of the whole heaven. Or, according to another interpretation, the Cherubim are the two hemispheres of the earth and the sword is the sun. But once my soul, which is wont to be divinely inspired oftentimes and so to speak like an oracle what it does not know, told me a worthier story. And this, if I can, I will recall and relate. It told me that the one God who really is has two high and chief powers, Goodness and Authority; and by Goodness he begat the universe, by Authority he rules that which was begotten, while third, midway between both and uniting both, is Reason. These, then, are the Cherubim and fiery sword, wherefrom the intent mind may win the virtues of love and fear of God, and follow the guidance of Reason.

"Now Adam knew his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man by means of God. And she also bare his brother Abel" (Gen. iv. 1 f.).

Those to whose virtue the lawgiver testifies—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses—are not introduced as knowing their wives. Woman stands for sense-perception, and knowledge consists in alienation from sense and body; so that the lovers of wisdom will be shown as rejecting rather than choosing things of sense. Moreover, the wives of such, though nominally women, are really virtues—Sara, Rebecca, Leah, and Sepphora the bird. But if we are to speak of the conception and birthpang of virtues the superstitious must shut their ears or depart. For our instruction is addressed to mystics worthy of most holy rites who practise true and real piety unadorned, without arrogance. The rest possessed by incurable evil, who measure sanctity and holiness only by pomp of words, pettiness of names, and unreal conventions, may not have us for hierophant.

Here, then, we begin the rite. Man mates with woman, male with female, following nature. But virtues must not have a mortal husband. Yet if they receive no additional

seed from any other they will wellnigh conceive sometimes of themselves. Who then is he that sows good seeds in them save the Father of that which exists, unbegotten and begetting all things? He sows then, or rather gives his own child which he sowed, for God begets nothing for himself, wanting naught but all things for whoso needs to receive. I will put forward the holy Moses a credible surety for what I say. He introduces Sarah as conceiving at the time when God visits her in her desolation (Gen. xxi. 1), bearing no longer to him that visited her but to him that yearns to obtain wisdom, who is called Abraham. Of Leah, he says more plainly, that God opened her womb (Gen. xxix. 31)—and this is the duty of the husband: but conceiving she bare not to God, who alone is self-sufficient, but to Jacob, so that virtue receives the divine seed from the First Cause, but bears to one of her lovers who is preferred to all her suitors. So again, when the allwise Isaac beseeches God, Perseverance or Rebecca becomes with child of the suppliant; and without prayer or supplication Moses when he took Sepphora finds her with child by no mortal at all (Exod. ii. 22).

These facts, ye mystics, whose ears are purged, take to your souls as holy mysteries in very deed: never speak them to any of the uninitiated: store in yourselves and guard this treasure wherein are laid not corruptible gold and silver but the fairest of all possessions, knowledge of the First Cause and Virtue, and thirdly of the offspring (*γεννήματος*) of both. But if you meet one of the initiated, lest he know any new mystic rite and hide it, cling to him until you are plainly instructed therein. For I was initiated into the great Mysteries by Moses whom God loved; nevertheless, when I saw the prophet Jeremiah and knew that he was not only a mystic but also a capable hierophant, I hesitated not to frequent his company. And he, being for the most part in an ecstasy, delivered an oracle as in the person of God, saying to (*πρός*) peaceable virtue, "Hast thou not called me house, and father, and

husband of thy virginity?" (Jer. iii. 4). This plainly shows that God is both house, the incorporeal place of incorporeal ideas, and the father of all things (*τῶν συμπάντων*) as having begotten them, and the husband of wisdom who casts the seed of happiness for the race of mortals into good and virgin soil. For it is fitting that God should converse with the unpolluted, untouched, and pure nature which is truly virgin, unlike us. The association of men makes virgins women; but when God begins to associate with a soul he declares that virgin which was woman before, since he removes the low and unmanly lusts which made it effeminate and introduces instead sincere and inviolate virtues. At any rate he will have no converse with Sarah before she quit all that is womanish and return to the rank of a pure maiden.

But perhaps it is possible that even a virgin soul should be shamefully polluted by intemperate passions, and so the oracle has safeguarded God, speaking of him as husband not of a virgin, but of virginity, which ever remains unchangeable and unchanged. So then it is fitting that the unbegotten and unchangeable God should sow the ideas of immortal and virgin virtues in the virginity which never changes its fashion into that of woman. Why then, O soul, since thou oughtest to be a virgin in God's house and cling to knowledge, shouldest thou forsake these and welcome sense which makes thee effeminate and pollutes thee? For so wilt thou bear a Cain, an ill possession.

But who is this Cain? The usual formula "and he (she) called his name" is not given as in the case of Seth (Gen. iv. 25). And this is the more noteworthy in the case of the first-born. Surely the custom is to specify the sex of the child and to give its name. Why then is it neglected here? The best explanation which can be given is this. All the rest of mankind give names to things which differ from the things, but Moses always uses the name which is the thing itself and expresses the nature of the thing. So when our mind—Adam—meets sense-

perception—Eve—she conceives that which is sensibly perceived—colour, sound, scent, savour, or body—and having conceived brings forth Opinion. For thanks to this union the mind fancies that all things which it sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches, are its own possessions, as if it was the discoverer and artificer of all. There was a time when Mind had no connexion with Sense, and had no organ of sense by which it could grasp external things. But God willed to offer it the means of apprehending not only incorporeal things but also solid bodies. So he completed the whole soul by knitting to that part already made the other section which he called generically Woman and specifically Eve—Sense in fact. And, united with Sense, Mind perceived clearly what before was dark, and like Alexander thought that all he perceived was his and not God's. How foolish was the thought the untrustworthiness of our senses proves.

So the boasting of Laban is perfectly ridiculous when he says "the daughters are my daughters, and the sons my sons, and the cattle my cattle, and all that thou seest are mine and my daughter's" (Gen. xxxi. 43). The daughters are the arts and sciences of the soul which are received from Mind. The sons are the particular reasonings of the soul. The cattle are the senses. All then are God's possessions, not thine own. If this lesson be not learned thou wilt ever be enslaved to harsh mistresses, to opinions, lusts, pleasures, crimes, follies, false thoughts. For if—Scripture says—the slave answer and say, I love my master and my wife and children, I will not depart free, he must go to the judgment seat of God and have his ear pierced, that he may not receive divine hearing to the freedom of his soul.

To the fool who says "I will pursue and overtake, I will divide spoils; I will satisfy my soul; I will slay with my sword; my hand shall prevail" (Exod. xv. 9), I would reply thus:—every creature that fancies he is pursuing is being pursued by disease, age, death, and a host of evils. He

that thinks to overtake and be master is mastered and overtaken, compelled to endure whatever he purposed to inflict. It is God's peculiar function to act, and no creature may assume it. If only mortals realize that their part is to suffer and endure they will be ready to bear the heaviest calamities, actively as well as passively, as a man co-operates in the shaving of himself, or as an athlete guards himself against a beating. And this being so, it is clear that no mortal can be lord of anything, that those who are called masters are such in appearance only, not in reality; and as there is a subject and slave so there must needs be a lord and master in the universe.

The one God, who is really ruler and governor, says "All things are mine" (Num. xxviii. 2). He that has learned this and is able to keep and guard in mind will offer to God a fair and spotless sacrifice, namely faith, in no feasts of mortals. For God has claimed the feasts for himself, offering this doctrine to the devotees of philosophy. And the doctrine is this: only God really feasts, for he only rejoices and is at peace, since only he is free from grief and pain and weariness—the perfect goal and source of all happiness and goodness. So the Sabbath is God's Sabbath or Rest, not men's (Exod. xx. 10, &c.), for rest is not inaction but tireless energy, and only God remains invariable and unwearied in his working. To him, then, belong Sabbaths and all feasts.

Consider our famous festivals. We must pass by the various institutions among various Greek and barbarian nations, based on various legends, all having as their end vainglory. Not the whole lifetime of man would suffice to define the inherent absurdities of each: but their general features may be briefly outlined. At every feast there is licence and licentiousness of every kind: day is turned into night and night into day: virtue is derided as harmful, vice is grasped as profitable. Such are the feasts of the reputed happy, and so long as they practise their unseemliness at home or in profane places they sin less

grievously methinks. But when, like the rush of a spreading torrent, it forces its way into the temples' holiest places, it casts out the sacred things and makes the sacrifices unholy, degrades the mysteries, destroys all purity and holiness, turns all worship of God into a vulgar jest. They cleanse their bodies with baths and purifications, but the passions of the soul wherewith their life is stained they neither wish nor attempt to wash away. Clad in white they are eager to walk to the temples in spotless raiment, and yet are not ashamed to bring into the shrines a polluted mind. If the victim be not perfect it is driven away, while they go on with the sacrifice with blemished souls, mutilated and bereft of wisdom, self-control, righteousness, and piety.

We must not like them suppose that God sees only external sensible things. Invisibly God enters the region of the soul. Let us prepare it as best we may to be a worthy abode of God: else he will imperceptibly depart from us. It is the King of kings, God the governor of the universe, who for gentleness and love of man reckoned his creatures worthy of visitation, and descended from the bounds of heaven to the uttermost parts of earth to benefit our race. What manner of house shall we prepare? Only a worthy soul is fit house for him. So then when we speak of the invisible soul as an earthly house of the invisible God we say rightly, and according to the Law. But in order that the house may be firm and fair to see, the foundations of good breeding and instruction must be laid, virtues with fair deeds must be built thereon. When the race of men has such a house made ready, the earth, and all that is therein, shall be filled with good hopes of a descent of God's powers; and they, bringing laws from heaven and ordinances for sanctification and consecration, shall come at their father's command. They sit down and consort with virtuous souls, and sow in them the happy race, even as they gave to Abraham the wise for their sojourn with him, Isaac, a perfect boon.

All things then are God's, and the purified mind rejoices in nothing more than in the confession that the Governor of all is its master: to be God's slave is the greatest boast—more precious than liberty, wealth, power, and all that mortals love. To his hegemony this true oracle testifies, "The earth shall not be sold as freehold, for all the earth is mine, because ye are strangers and sojourners before me" (Lev. xxv. 23). Does not this plainly prove that all things are God's by possession, and only granted to creatures for use? No creature is independent of other creatures: all are parts of the universe which God has created. God therefore has assigned to himself alone the sovereignty over this universe, and allotted the use and enjoyment thereof to the creatures who are subjects to him and to each other. I, who consist of soul and body, who seem to possess mind, reason, and sense, find none of them my own. Where was my body before birth? Whither will it go when I depart? Where are the different ages of this apparent personality? Where is the babe, the boy, the youth, the full-grown man? Whence came the soul? How long will it live with us? What is its essence? When did we get it? Before birth? Nay, we were not then in existence. After death? But then we who are thus and thus embodied shall be so no longer, in a bodiless state we shall be rushing to regeneration. Nay, even now when we live, we are rather ruled than rulers, known rather than knowing. For the soul, which we know not, knows us and lays commands upon us which we obey as servants their mistress, and when it will departs to the Ruler, leaving our house destitute of life, and if we constrain it to stay, vanishes. Is the mind then the seat of my personality—the mind that is found to be no mind in ecstasy, melancholy, or old age? Is reason my possession, or the organs of sense? Experience shows that I am not lord, but slave, of my senses. All that we have and use is not our own, not glory, nor wealth, nor honours, nor authority, nor functions of body and soul,

nor even life itself. If we realize that we have the use of these things we shall care for them as God's possessions, premising that it is a law that the maker may reclaim his own when he will. So shall we assuage our pain at their removal. But as it is, the many think that all things belong to them, and grieve exceedingly for their absence. It is then not only true, but a great source of consolation, that the world and all that is therein are the works and possessions of the Creator. And the possessor has granted to us his own work because he does not need it: but the user does not possess it because there is one lord and master of all, who will rightly say, "Mine is the whole earth—all creation is mine—and ye are strangers and sojourners before me."

As compared with each other men who have come into being are reputed to be sprung from the soil, and noblemen, all enjoying equal honour and equal rank, but as compared with God they are in the position of strangers and sojourners. Each one of us has come into this world as into a foreign state, wherein before birth it had no part, and being come each one sojourns until he exhaust the allotted time of life (τι βίου). At the same time, however, an all-wise doctrine is introduced that only God is really a citizen, all creatures being strangers, citizens only by a loose use of the word. Wise men know that this rank is boon enough, for no fool is so much as a sojourner in God's city, but an exile therefrom.

Scripture does not say by whom the land shall not be sold. The object of the omission is the advantage of the initiated reader. You will find, if you look closely, that even those who are said to give, rather sell than make presents, and those whom we suppose to receive benefits are really bought. The givers are in quest of a return of praise or honour, seek a recompense for the favour, and therefore really make a bargain under the specious title of a gift, while the recipients repay the boon. But God does not sell, he gives, pouring forth the continual

streams of benefits, seeking no return, for he needs naught, and no creature is capable of recompensing him.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that all things are God's possessions, and therefore that the mind is wrong in regarding the offspring of its union with sense as its own.

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